

**GRESHAM REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GRDCAC)  
April 14, 2021 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Christopher Bentley, Vice Chair  
Paul Drechsler  
Ryan Johnson  
Amelia Salvador, Chair  
Dimitrios Zourkos

COMMITTEE ABSENT: Helen Kidane

COMMISSION LIAISON PRESENT: Commission Vice President Eddy Morales  
Commissioner Dina DiNucci

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Bower, Gresham Redevelopment Commission (GRDC)  
Executive Director  
Amy Evans, Recording Secretary  
Cecille Turley, Recording Technician

GUEST SPEAKERS  
PRESENT:

**A. Call to Order**

**Chair Salvador** called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**1. Announcements**

**2. Public Comment**

None

**3 Meeting Minutes: February 10, 2021 and March 10, 2021**

Motion was made by **Mr. Drechsler** and seconded by **Vice Chair Bentley TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2021 AND MARCH 10, 2021**

The motion passed as follows:

<b>BENTLEY</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>KIDANE</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>DRECHSLER</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>SALVADOR</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>JOHNSON</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ZOURKOS</b>	<b>YES</b>

**4. Urban Renewal Draft Capital Improvement Program Fiscal Years 2021/2022 - 2025/2026**

**Emily Bower**, GRDC Executive Director, presented the PowerPoint presentation (PowerPoint attached as Exhibit A).

Motion was made by **Mr. Bentley** and seconded by **Mr. Zourkos** **TO RECOMMEND THE DRAFT URBAN RENEWAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FISCAL YEARS 2021/2022 - 2025/2026 TO THE GRESHAM REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

The motion passed as follows:

<b>BENTLEY</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>KIDANE</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>DRECHSLER</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>SALVADOR</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>JOHNSON</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ZOURKOS</b>	<b>YES</b>

**5. Sunrise Center Property Updates and Future Plans**

**Emily Bower**, GRDC Executive Director, presented the PowerPoint presentation (PowerPoint attached as Exhibit A).

GRDCAC Discussion

**Mr. Zourkos** said, I see that the Asia Kitchen building was purchased at about \$750,000, but was appraised at about \$650,000. What has caused that gap? Is it possible we need an updated appraisal?

- **Ms. Bower** said, these appraisals are largely taken from a gradient of similar properties within the nearby area. Appraisers look at the median value to determine an amount, and this determined appraised value may or may not be reflective of the market value. At the time of purchase, this was a reasonable price for the building.
- **Chair Salvador** said, correct, and at the time of purchase there was another potential buyer who had intended to use the building for an adult business that the committee decided would not be in the best interest of the community. This was an additional factor in the GRDC's decision to purchase. In addition, this appraisal was done in 2015-2016, which means that a current appraisal would probably show a higher value. The building needs a new appraisal and market analysis, which will most likely reflect less of a gap between purchase price and appraised value

**Mr. Drechsler** said, I'm concerned with some of the presentation and some things you've highlighted here. I was one of the few dissenting voices against purchasing the property, as I felt we didn't have enough of a plan for it even though I recognized the defensive and urgent nature of the purchase. My major concern is focusing on community-based organizations. We have one of the largest

concentrations of nonprofits in that corridor already, but this is one of the densest zonings in the city. We want to support commerce and business in this heavily-trafficked corridor. This commerce is what will revitalize the area. So, to take up a busy corner in this high-zoned area and limit it to only nonprofits is a disappointment, and limits the potential of that neighborhood to grow. I feel there is a misconception that, because this is Rockwood, the only thing we can build are nonprofits. But we also want to provide more business, more commerce, and more revenue for the area through business as well. It seems like we're already down this road for this site in particular, because we're only discussing nonprofits for the space, which don't provide a tax base for the city and don't provide more amenities for the residents in that neighborhood. I would support a much broader RFP, and let developers explain what they are interested in building. We know we can use more housing, restaurants, and retail in the area, and this is a very attractive site that's already zoned for this. I support the RFP process over simply selling the site, but there's much more potential (for less expense from the City) than only nonprofit tenants there.

**Chair Salvador** said, I completely agree. Coming from a real estate perspective, it makes the most sense to have the site be a best-use project where it would be a mixed-use development. We also need to make the neighborhood more of a destination location (like we're doing with the catalyst site), and using it to support the surrounding businesses will only help them grow and therefore help community thrive. I believe that the RFPs need to be well-written to seek out the proposals that would be suitable for the right types of projects for the neighborhood. I personally have a listing nearby, and I see that as being a very easily-developed site and playing off of the additional success of the Catalyst and Sunrise Sites. I see this as an opportunity to return to Rockwood's previous economic success in the 80s and 90s, which was largely due to the small businesses there. Paul is right, it can't be focused only on the nonprofits, we need to be bringing in business that create revenue that then goes back into the community. So, whatever goes in the site needs to pencil out well for the city and the neighborhood. It could be that there is a nonprofit element in this redevelopment, but there's no need to limit it to non-profit only. I would be interested to see what the developers bring forward in an RFP process, and I'd love to see a best use of this site.

**Ms. Bower** said, everything you've mention is clear when thinking about highest and best use of the site. I think my communication may have been unclear in the presentation. The idea is not to limit use of the site to nonprofits, but to bring our existing community-based organizations into the conversation about what those best uses are. I'd fully expect (like the Catalyst Site) a balance of nonprofit and private commerce could work very well in that space. I think we also need to be mindful, though, that the market for financing commercial mixed-use buildings right now is not great. So, how do we think about creating opportunities for housing that might later become mixed-use when the market is more favorable? I appreciate this dialogue, and I want to make sure I'm being very clear on what the ask is. This is not about wanting this to be a nonprofit-only site or even a nonprofit anchor tenant, but instead it's about inviting the community into the planning stages for what should be built on the site.

**Mr. Drechsler** said, I appreciate that we're not asking for nonprofit-only tenants on this site, but I want to express that we need to put nonprofits in every development, especially if there's opportunity to create wealth, jobs, and more opportunity with other types of tenants.

**Commissioner DiNucci** said, just following up on some background. I remember speaking with community members early on in this process who mentioned that things like movie theatres would be

of great interest to the community. So, I agree that we don't need to limit the RFP to nonprofits, but I also remember the early days of the former Rockwood Rising project, where we could not find a developer interested in the site. This could very well be the case again. I am wondering, do we have any market studies done recently that may indicate what the community needs? It would be very interesting to see what kinds of data came through from that and include it in the RFP, to see what kinds of ideas developers would come up with for those.

**Mr. Bentley** said there are a couple of very striking features of this site. The transit traffic is huge here, and I think we should capitalize on that. That means lots of opportunities for high-density housing there. It would be a prime candidate for that. I love the idea of mixed-use, too, with commerce on the ground floor and residential above. Also, there is a lot of asphalt in this area. It would be good to invest in design features that would make this area more walkable. If designed correctly, it could become a very unique and fun area to walk in. I agree with the idea of taking a market approach with this. I do think, Emily, the first stage in your process was to send out a community outreach to see what the community wants, and only after start speaking with community-based organization. I also agree with Paul that not every project needs a nonprofit, and nonprofits obviously don't provide tax revenue for the City. But they do provide very important access to services for the community. So, if there is a way to combine these types of much-needed services so that they could be more like one-stop shops for community needs, that would be idea, since so much of this community has limited access to transportation.

**Chair Salvador** said, what are the current rates for the leases in the Market Hall at the Catalyst Site?

- **Ms Bower** said, they are ranging right now from \$1500 to \$2500 for the micro-restaurant, grocery, and corner restaurant spaces.

**Chair Salvador** said, if there were a mixed-use project on this Sunrise Site, it would be advisable to keep rents at market rate. We want this project to sustain itself. We want it to be able to make enough profit that maintenance and everything is accounted for. So, I think whatever mixed-use project goes into that site shouldn't be very far below market rate. Another question: is it too premature to have some renderings of potential options for the site's redevelopment? Something for the community to be able to visualize the site's potential? Further, is Metro still offering grants for economic development studies? We may be eligible for grant funding to gather that kind of data

**Ms. Bower** said, yes, it may be possible to look at Metro's construction excise tax grants. But also, we should consider community-based organizations that may be interested in participating in this development process, not necessarily as a nonprofit, but as a stakeholder of the community. That is, how do we stabilize the existing services and livability for the residents that are currently here? How do we find a balance between providing services to the current community but also encourage commerce, new housing, and a vibrant commercial/retail center? There is a lot to balance in regard to what we want to see on that site. I like the idea of doing a market study that is both quantitative and qualitative, and then bringing our findings back to this committee to talk about feasibility of different options. The feasibility study is interesting, but I worry about getting too far ahead of the community in terms of visioning on that site. We are really wanting to hear what the needs are first, and then looking at feasibility studies and some potential development options from there. Does this feel like a good path forward in getting our arms around options for this site?

**Mr. Drechsler** said, yes, and I think the only thing I'd add would be that community engagement is always important as far as getting buy-in. And we certainly did a lot of that for the Downtown Rockwood project, but even for that project we had folks who indicated they didn't want to see any new development in the area, who wanted it to remain a playground. Change is pretty hard for communities. I just want to make sure we've got a broader perspective of the opportunities that come from the dense zoning and potential for commerce. You also mentioned office space, but I think residential development is at a very low vacancy rate and a very high demand. Downtown Rockwood, similarly, was quickly very full as well. So, we've certainly demonstrated large demand for housing and retail, and that means there is a large value-add in building them. Swimming pools, parks, and movie theatres are great, but on that particular site, on that corner, the long-term value is to provide value for the community through commerce and for the City through property taxes. Urban Renewal has already committed significant land to nonprofits, and it would be a missed opportunity to limit opportunities for retail and housing right now.

**Ms. Bower** said, this has been a very good discussion. We are going to work on looking into this information and bringing it back to the committee. I'm going to start by looking into the possibility of a market study. We will be taking a similar presentation to the commission in May, and I will do my best to synthesize this discussion tonight, and I may reach out to one or two of you in preparation for that. There is some time sensitivity with the sunseting of the district to make a plan for this site, which means we don't get to do the in-depth look into this property like we've been able to on others. This just means your input will be very valuable in the coming months.

**Mr. Bentley** said, to that end, I would love to hear what you're planning to do with the community feedback. So, that may be an email or may be an email, but I'd love to hear what the community has to say.

**Ms. Bower** said, absolutely. We won't be meeting in May, but we will meet in June, and we will definitely bring the feedback we obtain back to this committee for discussion

#### **4. Good of the Order**

**Chair Salvador** said, I would like the committee to recognize former Councilor Kirk French, who has passed away today. We'd like to honor his commitment to this community and the work he did for the City of Gresham for many years.

#### **B. Adjournment of meeting**

Hearing no further business, **Chair Salvador** adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

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AMELIA SALVADOR  
CHAIR

Respectfully submitted,

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Amy Evans  
Recording Secretary